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SENSITIVE
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SUBJECT: PRESIDENT LOBO URGES NATIONAL RECONCILIATION AND
PLEDGES IMPROVED QUALITY OF LIFE

REF: A. TEGUCIGALPA 27
[1](#)B. 09 TEGUCIGALPA 1302

[1](#)1. (U) Summary: The speech delivered by President Porfirio Lobo at his January 27 inauguration focused on national reconciliation and Honduras' reintegration into the community of nations. He pledged to implement the Tegucigalpa-San Jose Accord and to quickly establish the truth commission called for by the accord. He highlighted his commitment to the three pillars of his campaign plan: creating jobs and reducing poverty, expanding the reach and quality of education and health, and ensuring security. End Summary.

National Unity and Reconciliation

[1](#)2. (U) President Lobo acknowledged the political crisis that beset Honduras following the June 29 coup d'etat early on in his inaugural address. He said Honduras had just emerged from the worst crisis in its democratic history, but showed the world that it is a country that loves liberty and peace. Lobo thanked all those who did not vote for his political party, the National Party, noting that with their participation in the November 29 general election they had strengthened Honduran democracy. He told them that he will be "the President for all" because "Honduras is all of us" and "Honduras belongs to all." Lobo said there had been "no winners or losers" and only one winner - Honduras. Lobo said the reconciliation of the Honduran family began on inauguration day and that the country is now on the path towards understanding and national unity, adding that Hondurans have overcome their differences and are leaving the past behind and moving forward towards a shining and promising horizon. (Note: Surprisingly, Lobo's calls for national unity were greeted by boos from many in the audience. End Note.)

[1](#)3. (U) Lobo, as he had forecast, said his cabinet would include all political parties. Lobo then interrupted his inaugural address to sign the amnesty decree passed by the National Congress on January 26. Lobo underscored that the decree applies only to political offenses. He pledged to implement the Tegucigalpa-San Jose Accord and install as soon as possible the truth commission called for by the accord. Lobo said that it is just that the Honduran people and the world know the reality of the events before, during and after June 28.

International Community

¶4. (U) Lobo thanked Costa Rican President Oscar Arias for seeking a just and peaceful solution to the Honduran crisis and said the Tegucigalpa-San Jose Accord marked the beginning of the end of the crisis. Lobo thanked the Organization of American States (OAS) for being in constant contact with him as they monitored the Honduran crisis and said he is sure that Honduras will soon be re-admitted to the OAS. (Note: Lobo's remarks about the OAS were met with boos from some in the audience. End Note.) Lobo also thanked the Secretary of State and the Ambassador for their efforts towards normalization of the bilateral relationship. (Note: The mention of the Secretary was met by boos and some applause and the mention of the Ambassador by boos. End Note.) Lobo said his government wants to maintain the best relations possible with all countries of the world within the framework of mutual respect and civility. He noted his firm belief in peoples' self-determination. Lobo said he wants Honduras' national reconciliation to extend to reconciliation with the international community. Lobo stated that Honduras needs to look back so as to never forget where it came from, but also needs to have a clear vision of where it is going as a member of the international community in a globalized world that offers great opportunities.

Improved Standard of Living

¶5. (U) Lobo told his fellow citizens that his success as President will be measured by how the standard of living of

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all citizens, especially the poorest, improves. He said a new page is being written as of inauguration day and that the letters and words on that new page will refer to the dignity of the human person, the common good, solidarity, and making the person the basis of society as well as the government's primary objective. Lobo said it is not possible to ask people to put their lives in jeopardy for democracy if they are hungry or if social cohesion is not strengthened. He promised to seek an improved quality of life for all Hondurans. Lobo said the wealth of a nation cannot be measured by the earnings of the wealthiest, but should be measured by the quality of life of the poorest. He said no family should be allowed to go to bed hungry because the parents cannot find a decent job. Lobo, who developed his family's holding into one of the largest grain and cattle producing ranches in Honduras, underscored his knowledge of the agricultural sector and said he understood the challenges faced by small scale and large scale farmers. He said the agricultural sector must be supported and its products exported.

¶6. (U) Lobo warned that improving the standard of living would not be easy. He stated that his government is inheriting a country with serious financial problems including an immense and almost unmanageable foreign debt and rampant internal debt. He noted that, due to the political crisis, more than USD 2 billion in assistance was terminated. Lobo said that that amount of money could have purchased all the medicine needed by the country's public hospitals for a period of twenty years. Lobo said tourism and foreign investment must be attracted and promised investors they would find fair and clear laws.

¶7. (U) Lobo said the country's health care system must be modernized and improved. He said the health of a nation is not measured by the care received in private hospitals and clinics, but by the care received in public hospitals and clinics. He promised to quickly implement his campaign pledges of making education bilingual (Spanish and English) and donating laptops to school-aged children. He also promised to carry through on his campaign promise to improve education and said the key word is opportunity. Lobo promised to turn Honduras into a country where all can live

in safety, tranquillity, peace, and liberty. Lobo said that without security there is no prosperity. Lobo stated that the security of a nation is not measured by those who live with fences, alarms, high walls and guards, but how those in the country's poorest neighborhoods live.

¶8. (U) Lobo said a country's justice system is not measured by the number of its laws, judges, prosecutors, attorneys, police or jails but by whether justice is applied in a prompt and impartial way to all citizens. Lobo promised to fight corruption in both the government and the private sector and at all levels; he said the way to fight corruption is by ending impunity.

¶9. (SBU) Lobo's speech could have been written by us, touching on all the points we believe essential to moving Honduras forward: seeking reconciliation, tackling poverty, and fighting corruption. The boos from the audience came primarily from the elite stands, not from the parts of the stadium open to the general public, and reflect their majority support for Zelaya. Booing at inauguration is somewhat of a tradition at Honduran inaugurations - outgoing and former presidents often loath attending - and the elite is bitter about international rejection of the Micheletti regime. It was disappointing, however, to hear the booing of Lobo's call for reconciliation, demonstrating that the country has a distance to go in that respect.

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